Introduction of AIR service in trains

2331. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prasar Bharati proposes to entertain passengers on selected trains like Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express by introducing the AIR service *via* the world space satellite;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any agreement has been made with the Railways for providing the service; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD):(a) and (b) Prasar Bharati proposes to introduce Live Radio Service on board the trains of Indian Railways *via* World Space Satellite, on an experimental basis.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Conversion of DD Metro into DD News Channel

2332. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to convert DD Metro Channel into DD News Channel;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is proposed to start new channel in place of Metro Channel;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD):(a) and (b)

Prasar Bharati has infrorried that the Prasar Bharati Board has decided to convert DD Metro into 24 hours News Channel. The decision has been taken to fulfil a growing desire for news among the viewers, particularly among those without cable connection.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) DD Metro was positioned as an entertainment channel and in the opinion of Prasar Bharati, the needs of the entertainment segment of programming are met by other channels, including DD National Channel.

Uplinking policy for news and current affairs

2333. SHRI RAMAQHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Star News conform to Government's uplinking policy for news and current affairs channels;

(b) if not, the reasons for which Government have given several extensions to the channel so far, and

(c) the fresh steps taken by Government for strict implementation of uplinking policy for news and current affairs channels in letter and spirit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) The proposal of M/s. Media Content & Communications Services (India) Pvt. Ltd. for uplinking Star News Channel from India is under examination. Clearance/comments of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Department of Space (DOS) were sought. Clearance from DOS has been received and from MHA it is awaited. An Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) has also been constituted consisting of representatives from Ministry of Law, Deptt. of Company Affairs and l&B Ministry to examine all aspects of the proposal including equity structure, ownership, etc.

(b) and (c) 'Star News' Channel was a running channel being uplinked from Hong Kong after getting feed from India through VSNL. Star News